

DOCKET NO: 103413 CIP
Serial No. 09/847,913
Response to office action dated 02/10/2005

PATENT

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for expediting warranty service on defective products comprising: providing a unique identifier on or within each product, the unique identifier electronically recorded in a Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) transponder; providing consumer purchaser or owner identification and retail purchase date data to a manufacturer or other warrantor; wherein the manufacturer or other warrantor registers a warranty with respect to the product upon receiving the data; providing means to read the unique identifier at package-delivery courier service locations; and providing a web server computer system which, upon reading a unique identifier on a defective product which is picked up by the package-delivery courier service or brought to a package-delivery courier service location, authorizes the package-delivery courier service to deliver the defective product to a warranty return location or indicates that the warranty is not in force.

2. (Currently Amended) Method of claim 1 wherein upon said product being returned to a return location ~~by any said person~~, said data is accessible at said return location or by a return agent, thereby facilitating identification of said owner and owner address, whereupon said product can be returned by said return agent.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Cancelled)

~~3.~~ (Original) Method of claim 1 wherein said consumer purchaser or owner identification information and date said product was purchased at retail are provided at said point of purchase at retail by automatically accessing customer identification information provided to said retail seller in connection with said purchase and said date of purchase.

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4. (Previously Presented) Method of claim 1 wherein said product retail purchase date and consumer or owner identification are automatically provided to said manufacturer or distributor when said information is received from said consumer purchaser or owner, and said manufacturer is automatically charged for delivery of said purchase date and consumer or owner information.

5. (Previously Presented) Method of claim 1 wherein said owner information is maintained in a web computer server which is accessible from client computers over the Internet, and when a product is returned, said product is identified by said unique identifier on or within said product, said server is queried with said identifier, and arrangements are made for return of said product.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) Method of claim 1 wherein said package delivery courier service is an overnight courier or parcel service which has equipment to automatically read said unique identifier on or within said product and to automatically query a remote return service computer server which, in turn, automatically provides corresponding owner contact notification and/or return shipping information.

7. (Currently Amended) Method of claim 1 wherein said package delivery courier service can automatically query said manufacturer over the Internet to determine whether a product is within warranty return privileges and to receive authorization to accept return of said product from said owner and ship said product to an authorized service location.

8. (Previously Presented) Method of claim 1 wherein said return instructions are contained in a label which includes an RFID sticker transponder adapted to be affixed to a product surface.

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comprising a flexible circuit substrate having an antenna formed thereon and a transponder circuit disposed on said substrate and coupled to said antenna.

9. (Original) Method of claim 13 wherein said sticker transponder comprises an adhesive layer coupled to a first surface of said flexible circuit substrate.

10. (Original) Method of claim 9 wherein said sticker transponder comprises a release liner affixed to said adhesive layer, said release liner being selectively removable to permit said sticker to be affixed to said product.

11. (Original) Method of claim 10 wherein said sticker transponder comprises an indicia layer coupled to a second surface of said flexible circuit substrate opposite from said first surface, said indicia layer comprising a space permitting indicia to be printed thereon.

12. (Original) Method of claim 11 wherein said transponder circuit further includes a memory.

13. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) Method of claim 1 wherein a product is delivered for repair to a package delivery or overnight courier service which has means to access to said warranty registration data which is stored on a remote computer storage medium by reading said unique identifier on or within said product, and wherein said service thereby determines whether said warranty is in force and a warranty service location to which to deliver said defective product.

14. (Currently Amended) Method of claim 1 wherein said unique identifier on or within each product sold by said manufacturer is electronically recorded in an RFID device embedded within a label on which are printed return instructions which identify a package delivery or courier service which is equipped to read said RFID device, wherein said package or courier service has means to access owner identification, owner address, and warranty information corresponding to

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said unique identifier, and wherein said service thereby delivers defective products to an authorized warranty service location.

15 11. (previously presented) Method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of marking each product with return instructions and a reward offer to any person who finds said product after it has been lost; and offering to return each product to a registered owner in the event said product is lost and returned by said person who finds it if said owner provides data comprising owner identification and/or date said product was purchased at retail.

16 12. (Previously Presented) Method of claim 11 ¹⁵ wherein the return instructions comprise a reward offer to any person who finds the product after it has been lost.